

following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3448. An act to provide tax relief for small businesses, to protect jobs, to create opportunities, to increase the take home pay of workers, to amend the Portal-to-Portal Act of 1947 relating to the payment of wages to employees who use employer owned vehicles, and to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to increase the minimum wage rate and to prevent job loss by providing flexibility to employers in complying with minimum wage and overtime requirements under that Act.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HARKIN:

S. 1822. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to permit the Secretary of Agriculture to waive the prohibition on the termination of conservation reserve contracts for certain lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. DOLE:

S. 1823. A bill to restore the American family, enhance support and work opportunities for families with children, reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, reduce welfare dependence by requiring work, control welfare spending, and increase State flexibility; read twice and placed on the calendar.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. KASSEBAUM:

S. Con. Res. 63. A concurrent resolution to express the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Agriculture should dispose of all remaining commodities in the disaster reserve maintained under the Agricultural Act of 1970 to relieve the distress of livestock producers whose ability to maintain livestock is adversely affected by the prolonged drought conditions existing in certain areas of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. HARKIN:

S. 1822. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to permit the Secretary of Agriculture to waive the prohibition on the termination of conservation reserve contracts for certain lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM CONTRACTS MODIFICATION ACT OF 1996

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I am today introducing legislation to make a minor modification in the rules applicable to the early termination of Conservation Reserve Program contracts. This bill will provide greater flexibility in the management of CRP acreage and increase opportunities for

livestock production using land that has been enrolled in CRP, while continuing to protect against soil erosion and to conserve the natural resource base.

The Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 established a new early termination option for holders of CRP contracts. Participants who entered into a contract before January 1, 1995, may terminate the contract at any time if the contract has been in effect for at least 5 years. Certain lands considered to be of high environmental value are not eligible for the early termination option. The act specifically disallows the early termination of contracts on land having an erodibility index of more than 15, a restriction that also was included in the rules for the early CRP termination option offered this spring through administrative action independent of the farm bill.

The restriction on early removal of the more highly erodible land from the CRP is obviously designed to reduce the potential for returning land to crop production where doing so presents a higher risk of damaging levels of soil erosion. Of course, a principal purpose of the CRP was to remove highly erodible land from production in order to conserve soil, so it is reasonable to ensure that early terminations of CRP contracts do not nullify the benefits of the CRP or negate the investment in conservation made by taxpayers through CRP payments.

While the prohibition against early termination of contracts on land having an erodibility index higher than 15 seems reasonable in general, it does not take much sense to livestock producers who would like to remove land from the CRP in order to use it for haying or grazing. The nationwide emergency release of CRP for grazing and haying has relieved a good deal of the concern regarding access to CRP acres for livestock feed—but only for this year. There is a real need for a longer term resolution of this matter.

My bill would simply allow the Secretary to waive the restrictions on the types of land that may be removed from the CRP under the early termination option if the Secretary determines that the land will be used only for haying, grazing or other use not involving the destruction of vegetable cover. By ensuring that the vegetable cover is not destroyed, protection against soil erosion will be maintained. In addition, any such waiver can be made only if the Secretary determines that the land will be used only in a manner that adequately protects the natural resource base. As discussed, the waiver authority contained in this bill is designed specifically to deal with the prohibition against early termination of CRP contracts on land with an erodibility index higher than 15. There may be some other instances in which a waiver meeting the requirements of this bill could be granted, but they would be tightly limited by the

requirement that vegetable cover not be destroyed and that the natural resource base be adequately protected.

Mr. President, this bill is a common-sense solution that will provide more reasonable options to CRP contract holders for returning land to economic use while maintaining vegetable cover and protecting the natural resource base. I hope my colleagues will support this legislation and that it will be enacted at the earliest opportunity. I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1822

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TERMINATION OF CONSERVATION RESERVE CONTRACTS BY OWNERS OR OPERATORS.

Section 1235(e) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3835(e)) is amended by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

“(2) CERTAIN LANDS EXCEPTED.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the following lands shall not be subject to an early termination of contract under this subsection:

“(i) Filterstrips, waterways, strips adjacent to riparian areas, windbreaks, and shelterbelts.

“(ii) Land with an erodibility index of more than 15.

“(iii) Other lands of high environmental value (including wetlands), as determined by the Secretary.

“(B) WAIVER.—The Secretary may waive the application of subparagraph (A) to land if the Secretary determines that the land will be used only—

“(i) for haying, grazing, or other use not involving the destruction of vegetative cover; and

“(ii) in a manner that adequately protects the natural resource base of the land.”.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 1386

At the request of Mr. BURNS, the name of the Senator from Idaho [Mr. KEMPTHORNE] was added as a cosponsor of S. 1386, a bill to provide for soft-metric conversion, and for other purposes.

S. 1578

At the request of Mr. FRIST, the name of the Senator from Oregon [Mr. HATFIELD] was added as a cosponsor of S. 1578, a bill to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 1997 through 2002, and for other purposes.

S. 1714

At the request of Mr. BURNS, the names of the Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL], and the Senator from South Carolina [Mr. THURMOND] were added as cosponsors of S. 1714, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to ensure the ability of utility providers to establish, improve, operate and maintain utility structures, facilities, and equipment for the benefit, safety, and well-being of consumers, by removing limitations on maximum